

## ANNIVERSARY

A little boy's starched white collar.  
An insect traversing the curve.

Dusky pearls strung on a wire in my hair  
wound low in a bow at the cerebellum,

the brain's wing-shaped center for balance.  
It's April. There's no balance here.

Not in the arch twisted from an ice storm-  
struck tree, the bluegrass grabbing my lace.

Scent of smoked meats mingling with the sugar-sweet  
confections just burst on the apples' limbs.

Hands. Fingers. Ring of rough steel he bought  
for \$35, whose ends don't fuse but overlap

like an overbite—the symbolism isn't  
lost on a woman like me:

There is a beginning and an end, April,  
and one of us will go before the other.

Bees as a species are already dying  
but we have tons. There, today,

we have a live bee for every lapel.  
A bride should have a veil, they said

and so I bought one. Paid and left it;  
like the skin of a fetal lamb

piled still on the counter, it was  
too finely made and traditional to be mine.

The sun dims and it's April again.  
I can see a fire station now from our bed.

Sirens come and go all night.  
On his left hand, the steel is gentle

as the shadows emergencies cast on our wall,  
a procession of soft, bright bursts.

As we pulled away in the long black car,  
our friend who would die the next year

tried to hand us a lit sparkler through the window.  
What happens to our questions when we die?

I wondered aloud on our wedding night  
about the origin of Daylight Saving Time,

and he told me. It's dawn, dark, April.  
He blinks and apple blossoms fall all over my face.

What's the name for the way we wake  
to sirens and each roll inward on the frame?

It wasn't us this time, I mean.  
We're still sleeping in our bed, alive,

candles cool and unlit, wicks buzzing.  
Small menace makes sweet the body

of April and that's the meaning of bees.  
But the mind's shape is simpler.

When I say he hammered the ring to make it fit,  
I mean the ring fits.

*This poem originally appeared in the New England Review*